

The Journal of
SELF-EMPLOYMENT.

IN SECRET.

Left under the Hand-writing

OF THE

Rev. Mr. CORBET,

Late of Chichester. *R*

A NEW EDITION.

HULL :

Printed by J. FERRABY.

M,DCC,XCV.

*The gift of
Rev. Mr. Ferraby*

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

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Handwritten the Hand-writing

OF THE

R. M. CORSETT



A NEW EDITION

PRINTED

By J. F. CORSETT

LONDON

PREFACE.

THE Editor of the following excellent little Tract has taken some Pains to acquire a more perfect Account of the Author, than that given by Mr. UNWIN. Unfortunately the Name of Mr. CORBET is unnoticed in the Biographia Britannica; nor are there any Traces to be found of his Life and Character, except in a Sermon preached by Mr. BAXTER on Occasion of his Death. Indeed it appears probable from the Turn of Mind, which is conspicuous

cuious in this small Work, that the Author would not be greatly distinguished amidst those civil and religious Controversies, which so much agitated the Age, in which it was written. It breathes nothing of a curious, speculating Spirit. Its Language is not adapted to the Niceties of Disputation; and the Temper it implies is too meek and pacific, too candid and forbearing, to obtain for its Author, the Praise of those, who are more solicitous for the Peculiarities of a Party*, than for the

* Mr. Corbet's Name is barely mentioned in Neal's History of the Puritans. Mr. Palmer, with his usual Impartiality and Judgment has given a larger Account of him, in Substance the same with that here extracted from Baxter.

the *Truth, which is according to Godliness*. Before, therefore, he began the Enquiry, the Editor concluded from the internal Evidence of this Treatise, that he should be able to discover few Anecdotes of Mr. CORBET; that he was numbered amongst those, of *whom the World was not worthy*.

Mr. BAXTER's Account of him coincided with such an Expectation. He was evidently possessed of the most ardent Esteem for Mr. CORBET; but he relates no Particulars of his Life which are striking, except his Submission to the Appointments of Providence,

vidence, and the Candour of his Sentiments. He was one of those Non-conformists who were ejected from their Livings, and silenced. He peaceably obeyed the Injunctions of Government, (unreasonable as they were) and never attempted to gather any Assembly for public Preaching. So irreproachable was his Conduct in this Respect, that except for his want of Conformity he was seldom censured, never accused. In the Questions respecting the five Articles, or the Doctrines termed ARMINIANISM, he adopted the reconciling Plan. Something in Episcopacy, Independency, and Presbyterianism he

he approved ; and some Things he disliked in each. However he constantly joined in Worship with the established Church, on this Principle, that he was unwilling to separate farther from so large a Society, professing Christianity, than he was compelled, by the Terms of Communion being clearly unscriptural. He lived in Love and Peace with those of every Persuasion, who seriously sought the Salvation of Men, and was never in the least warped to the Interests of a Party.

Whoever weighs the submissive and pious Temper expressed

pressed in the following Reflections, will not be surpris'd at Mr. BAXTER's Account of his Behaviour in the disastrous Days in which he lived. " He endured his Part in the common Lot, with as little Murmuring, as any Man I ever knew. I never heard him speak dishonourably of the King, nor utter Invectives against those, by whose unchristian Spirit he was involved in so sharp a Trial. I never heard him complain of the Loss of his Ecclesiastical Preferments, nor of the Difficulties to which he was reduced. I never had any Dispute with him, and there appeared in him a constant Solicitude

licitude to avoid Contentions, and Offences, to preserve the Reputation of those of his Brethren, who were more applauded than himself, and to mortify every Symptom of Jealousy and Envy."

He was very much employed in the Study of his own Heart; and perceived by the divine Blessing, on the Sufferings with which he was exercised, a sensible Increase of Faith, and Holiness; but tho' confidently assured of his own Sincerity, and the Certainty of a future State, so lively were his Apprehensions of the Importance of his approaching Change, and what it
is

is to enter into a new and unchangeable World, that he was not without those Terrors to which, in their present frail Condition, poor Mortals are frequently exposed, when Death is near. The Foundation of his Trust, however, remained unshaken. He retained hope towards God; founded on the Assurance, that his only Son, when he condescended to be *Partaker of Flesh and Blood*, took *Part of the same Trial*, and is even yet *touched with the Feeling of their Infirmities*, whose Hearts are upright before him, *for whom he ever liveth as a merciful Intercessor.*

The End to be answered by
the

the Republication of this small Tract, is thus assigned by its former Editor, Mr. UNWIN ; It is to prevent the Increase of those gloomy Apprehensions, which have crept in among some pious Persons concerning the Almighty, as tho' he was an angry, arbitrary Monarch, rather than their reconciled Father, full of Mercy and Compassion. By the Growth of such Misconceptions, the *Hearts of the righteous are made sad, whom God hath not made sad* ; and the bright Lustre of pure and undefiled Religion has been greatly diminished in the Eye of those, who are not the Friends of evangelical Truth.

Mr. CORBET's

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

STATE of his SOUL.

His Introduction.

IN order to Peace of Conscience, and Assurance of my good Estate towards God; it must in Reason be supposed, that I may rightly understand the Marks of Sincerity set down in God's word; as also the ruling Inclination and Motions of my own Soul; and that I may be so far assured of my right Understanding of the things aforesaid, as to have no reasonable Ground for doubting thereof. For I have no other ordinary Way to know my Sincerity in order to the said Peace and Assurance, but to examine it according to my best Understanding by the Marks thereof set down in God's Word.

In this Self-examination it is requisite that I use all Diligence, and Impartiality; with Constancy:

INTRODUCTION. xiii

Constancy : And that I earnestly pray for God's Assistance in it, and heartily offer myself to his Search, as David did, Psal. cxxxix. 23.

Wherefore if upon the most impartial and diligent Search that I can make, according to the best of my Understanding, together with earnest and constant Prayer to God to assist me therein, as in my greatest Concern ; it doth most rationally appear to me, that the ruling Inclination and Motions of my Soul are agreeable to the Marks of Sincerity set down in God's Word, then my Conscience doing its Office aright, is to judge for me accordingly, *viz.* That I am sincere. And in this Judgment I acquiesce, because it is the Judgment of God's Agent and Minister, which he hath set up within me to judge under him of my eternal State, according to his Law, by which he himself doth and will judge me.

God hath the same Aspect upon the Soul, which Conscience his Vicegerent hath, as it ordinarily judgeth not against him or without him,

him, but under him and according to his Judgment, either acquitting or condemning. To this Purpose the Apostle speaketh, *1 John iii. 20, 21. If our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all Things: if our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God.*

The State of my Own

S O U L,

According to the strictest Search that I
can make.

Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

*Search me, O Lord, and know my Heart,
try me and know my Thoughts, and see if
there be any wicked Way in me, and lead
me in the Way everlasting. Amen.*

The following Particulars were set down in
the Year 1663.

AS far as I am able to discern my Heart
and Ways, I have chosen the Lord
for my Portion. I take up my Rest in Him,
and not in the Creature. To love and fear,
and admire, and bless him, and to have Com-
munion with him is my chief Joy: and the
eternal Vision and Fruition of God is my great
Hope. I would not only have God hereafter,
but here in this World for my chief Good.
He is even now better than all the World.

I come to God by Jesus Christ; and as I believe in God, I believe also in Christ, and rejoice and glory in him; and acknowledging my own Sinfulness and Unworthiness, I rest intirely on him as the Ground of my Justification to Life, and of all Favour and Acceptance with God.

I receive Christ as my Lord, and give up myself to him. I let him into my Heart by Faith. I esteem him precious, and am willing to suffer the Loss of all, that I may win Him.

I desire to know him in the Power of his Death and Resurrection, and am much grieved that I do so weakly experience that Power, and feel it no more operative in me, in my dying to Sin and the World, and in living and walking in the Spirit.

I do not cease to lament the more heinous Sins of my Life; and cannot forbear continually imploring the Pardon of them. I do not return again to them, and I resolve never so to do.

I watch and pray, and strive against all Sin, but especially against those Sins, to which I

into the State of his Soul.

3

am more especially inclined. My Conflicts are daily, and I am put hard to it; but I do not yield up myself to any Sin, nor lie down in it; yea, I do not suffer sinful Thoughts to lodge in me.

I am many Times much discomposed, damped in Spirit, deadened in Duty, distracted in my Studies, and molested and hindered every Way by the Sin that dwelleth in me. But I resolve, that Sin shall have no Rest in my Soul, and that I will never enjoy it.

Though I cannot keep Sin out of my Heart, yet it doth not reign in my mortal Body, nor do I yield my Members to the Service of it.

I would fulfil all Righteousness, and owe Nothing to any Man but Love. I had a hundred fold rather suffer Wrong, than do Wrong.

It was said of Christ, that no Guile was found in his Mouth; and of the faithful Company that followed the Lamb, that no Guile was found in their Mouth. And that it may be so with me, I endeavour with my whole Heart.

4 Mr. CORBET'S Enquiry

✓ I trust God with my chief outward Concernment; even with that, about which I am most solicitous, and wherein to be satisfied is of great Moment to me, for that it hath as great an Influence upon my Spirit, as any outward Thing hath. And I do believe that God will provide for me herein, or otherwise supply the Want of it.

✓ My earnest Desire of God is, that my outward Condition may be so stated by his wise and gracious Providence, as I may be least exposed to Temptation, and best disposed and furthered unto Duty.

✓ I have an Inclination to seek Self, particularly in vain Applause, and that in religious Services; and herein I have been highly guilty: but I shame myself for it before God, and I am willing to be satisfied in the Praise that comes from him alone; and I trust through his Grace, that I can deny myself in Matter of Reputation to do his Will.

✓ I love the Lord Jesus Christ, and all his Saints. The broken Estate of the Church, especially by intestine Evils, is a great Trouble to my Spirit. The Scandals of Professors I

am truly grieved at, and I would not by their Weaknesses seek to excuse my own Faults, or an applauding of my own Virtues.

I have no settled Bitterness and Revenge against my Enemies, but I love, pity and pray for them. As concerning God's Enemies I am more provoked, but I would not be inhuman or cruel against them; for the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God.

I contemn none. I would not embitter the Spirit of any. I would answer all Obligations of Courtesy; as accounting it a Righteousness. I would not insult over the Weakness of any; and this is partly out of natural Tenderness and moral Considerations; and I find, that the Goodness and Kindness of God, the Meekness and Gentleness of Christ, hath hereunto made impression upon me.

I find upon the Review of my Life past, according to the clearest Judgment that I can make, that I have not gone backward, but proceeded forward, in the Ways of Godliness. And this Increase I reckon not by

sudden fits now and then happening, but by the main Progress of the Work in the total Sum.

I have been grieved that I am no more elevated in the Hope of Heaven, and that I cannot attain to a longing Desire to be gone hence, and to be there with Christ. I have laboured to raise up my Heart, and have had Enlargement, even when Deadness and Flatness had been upon me. I think sometimes, were my Evidences clear for Heaven, I would exult to be gone hence this very Hour; but I find not this Readiness at all Times.

When I have had a good Design in hand for God's Glory and some public Benefit, I watched against Vanity of Mind, and vain Glory in carrying it on; and I desire purely to aim at God's Glory, and to be satisfied with my Reward in Him. And I take heed, that I forget not my Mortality, when I am pursuing that Design; but I would fain bring up myself to this Frame, to be contented to be taken hence in the midst of it, as judging that I shall be no loser by my Removal, and that God cannot stand in Need of that Service.

Lord,

Lord, forgive my inordinate Self-love, which hath disturbed the Actings of pure Charity in several Instances of Moment, Self-love hath had Motions contrary to the Love of God and my Neighbour. Nevertheless my Judgment hath disallowed it, and I have for the most part, done that which the Love of God and my Neighbour did command.

O Lord, forgive my ten thousand Talents! I come to Jesus Christ, who hath made Satisfaction, and lay this heavy Reckoning to his Account. Lord, forgive my Iniquity, for it is exceeding great!

1675.

UPON the Review of the foregoing Evidences, after twelve Years, I find through Grace the same abiding in me, and more and more rooted. And some Particulars which made me more to doubt of my good Estate, I find to be since that Time in a greater Degree vanquished.

I have done what in me lies, to call to remembrance all my remarkable Sins, from
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my Childhood and Youth till now : And as far as I can judge, I have repented of them both generally and particularly. And I now repent of them all, from the Bottom of my Heart, with a Self-abhorrence, if I can know my own Heart by the strictest and most impartial Search that I can make.

Upon the best Judgment that I can make of the Nature of Sin, and the Frame of my own Heart and Course of Life, I know no Sin lying upon me, which doth not consist with habitual Repentance, and with the Hatred of Sin, and with an unfeigned Consent that God be my Saviour and Sanctifier, and with the Loving of God above all.

The Mercy of God towards me in the prolonging of the Day of Grace ; in the Striving of his Spirit ; in his Chastisements ; in the Checks of Conscience ; in the Recovery of my Soul out of Distempers and Backslidings ; doth greatly affect my Heart, and strongly engage me to him. This makes me often call upon my Soul and all that is within me, to bless his holy Name.

Though

Though my spiritual Growth be very low and slow; yet to this present Time, I have not grown worse, but better; speaking of Growth in the whole Space, or greater Spaces of my Time past, and not every particular Day.

By Prayer and Endeavours long continued, I have in some Measure overcome a special very sinful Distemper of Mind, and gained the contrary Temper against a natural Propensity.

Though my Faith in Christ be weak, yet to be a Partaker of his Promises, I am ready to part with all that is dear in this World, and I have no Hope of Happiness, but in Christ.

Though I have had Doubtings touching the promised Salvation, yet I know that as to my own Felicity, I prize nothing more than that Salvation, being the glorifying and enjoying God for ever, and I embrace it as my best Good.

I love Christ, whom I have not seen, and I am affected towards him, as towards a Person

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son who both taught and did the most excellent Things, and promised a most excellent State to his Followers, and purchased their Redemption at the dearest Rate.

I am heartily grieved for loving God so little: Yet I am sure this I wrote, according to a full Persuasion at that time, viz: I love Nothing more than God. In my Esteem and Choice, I prefer the spiritual and heavenly Life, incomparably before the animal and earthly Life. And this Esteem and Choice is made good by Performance in ordinary.

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I love to love God: And I desire this Love not only as an Evidence of my Salvation, but for itself. I had much rather have a Heart to love him perfectly, than to have all the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of this World.

My Conscience bears me witness, that in the present Exercise of my Ministry, I have no Self-end of worldly Advantage, or Reputation among Men, or any Interest of the carnal Mind: But if the Command of Christ, and the Necessities of Souls did not oblige me

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to this Service, I should gladly retire to Privacy and Solitude.

My temporal Estate is mean and low, yet I am contented with it, and humbly bless God for what I have. I live in as narrow a Compass for Expences, as I can, that I may have something to give to the Poor, and to be helpful to those that are in need, according to my Ability. And as God hath required of us to love Mercy; and our Saviour hath said, *It is a more blessed Thing to give, than to receive*; so I have more Pleasure in giving a Portion to the Needy, as far as my mean Estate will bear, than in laying out for the Delight of my own Sense, or worldly Conveniencies. And this proceeds not from a Conceit of Merit in any Thing that I can do, but from a Love to please God, and do Good.

Though I have a good Knowledge about the Premises, yet I am apt to waver about the Conclusion. And though I apprehend the Evidences of my Sincerity to be clear, yet a Timorousness remains in me. ✓

Though I have not as yet overcome the Fear of Death, yet I am sure, that the Unwillingness

Willingness that is in me to die, is not that I might enjoy the Pleasures of Sense, or any Gratification of the animal Life.

I feel in myself a Burden of Sin and Corruption; much Sensuality, Earthliness, Selfishness; nevertheless I judge, there is that Predominance of Love to God and Holiness, which I hope is unmoveably seated in my Soul; whereupon I hope that it cannot be; that I should be cast out of his blissful Presence into that Perdition, which is a State of immutable Hatred of him.

I apprehend, that the most horrid and hellish State of Hell itself lies in its everlasting and utmost Enmity against God:

Thus I am searching and trying my Heart and Ways; and what I find by myself, I write down; that I may have it by me for my Relief in an evil Day, and an Hour of Temptation: For I must expect the Time, when by Weakness, or Anguish of Body or Mind, I may be disabled to recollect myself, and duly to state the Case of my own Soul. And the Powers of Nature may so fail, that

I may have but a very weak Apprehension of what I have to do in this great Concern,

I am warned by the Parable of the ten Virgins to look to it, that together with my Lamp, I may have Oil in my Vessel, and be ready to enter in with the Bridegroom at his Coming.

Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner, to me one of the chiefest of Sinners! O my exceeding Sinfulness! O the Riches of thy Goodness towards me! Should not I loath my carnal Self! Should not I grieve for grieving thy Spirit? I desire to do so, I hope to do so.

Do what thou wilt with me, so thou pardon, and sanctify, and save me! I am afraid of thy Judgments, I can endure but little, O how weak is my heart! Nevertheless I will endeavour, and I trust thro' Grace, that I shall be enabled to bear thy correcting Hand. Thou art wise and holy, thou art merciful and gracious; thou retainest not thine Anger for ever, because thou delightest in Mercy!

O spare me, and consider me, and deal with me not after my Sins, and reward me

Not after mine Iniquities; but as far as the East is from the West, so far remove my Transgressions from me, comfort me, and satisfy me, for I wait for Relief from thee! Whatsoever befalls me, I will put my Trust in thee!

I believe, O Lord, help my Unbelief. Lord, increase my Faith. O my God, I lie at thy Feet and Mercy, I put my sinful distressed Soul into the Hands of Jesus Christ, and I rest on the Covenant of Grace made in him, as all my Salvation, and all my Desire. Amen.

More Observations touching the State of my Soul. 1676.

O THE wonderful Mercy of God towards me a most vile and wretched Sinner, in convincing, rebuking, and awakening me unto a Self-abbhorrence, and an utter Detestation of my Sins, my special Sins; so that I cannot be reconciled to them.

Since the more powerful Awakening of my Conscience I never have, and am persuaded I never shall return to those former Sins, which made a Breach between God and my Soul.

I hate every Sin impartially. A sinful State is, in my internal Sense, an horrid and an hellish State.

I find myself firmly resolved to give up any Part of my worldly Estate, that I shall be found to hold to another's Wrong. If it be doubtful where the right lies, I am resolved first to endeavour a Reference to conscientious knowing Men; and if that cannot be fully had, to submit it to a legal Trial, with a Desire that Right may take place. I know not that I hold any such Estate, or that there is any Doubt of my legal Right to any Thing that I possess; but I have made Supposition for the Trial of my own Spirit.

When I had a Father or Mother, I would have trusted them, to defend or deliver me from any Evil, from which it was in their power to defend or deliver me. In the same Manner I now trust to my loving Wife. Why then should I be suspicious of God, in whose Hands I am? Why should I doubt of his dear Love and tender Mercy towards me, or call in Question his Good-will to preserve, or deliver me from any Affliction, that would be too

hard for me to bear; or to sustain, and comfort me under any Suffering, which he sees fit to inflict upon me?

✓ If when I was more careless and forgetful of God, and when I ventured upon Breaches with him, he was pleased to convince me of my Sin, and to rouse me up to a greater Care, and to make me more earnest for Pardon, and for Healing, and for all needful Grace, and more thoroughly resolved to follow him throughout; surely he will not refuse me in my Addresses for more Grace, and a more confirmed State of Holiness. If I "*follow on to know the Lord,*" I shall know him, and see his Salvation.

Though Death and Judgment be of dreadful Consideration; though God be holy and just, and I be vile, and guilty, and worthy of eternal Perdition; yet why should I doubt of Mercy and Forgiveness, and of Support and Comfort in the Darkness of Death, and of justification in the Day of Judgment, from a merciful and faithful God, through a powerful Redeemer and Advocate; seeing as a humble penitent Believer, I lie at his Feet, and call myself

myself into his Arms, and wait on his Grace, and am resolved to keep his Ways, and never to return to Folly.

I more desire to be sincere, than to know that I am so. The Comfort and Delight of being and doing Good, I set not so much by, as the very being and doing Good. To love God, and to be conformable to him, is that which I most of all desire.

I will trust God in his Ways, I will strive against an over-timorous Sollicitude about my Salvation, and will commit myself to God, who is infinite Goodness and Love, and I will lie down and take my Repose therein.

I am grieved, when I observe, or hear of the Scandals of some Professors; and the Disorders of those, that are in Charity to be judged sincere; and the Follies and Frailties of the more sincere and upright. And it humbles me, by causing me to reflect upon myself, and my own Faultiness, and Weakness, and Proneness to offend: And it makes me more to desire the heavenly Society, and to be among the Spirits of just Men made perfect.

My Sins of Sensuality in every Kind and Degree, I search out, and repent of. I am kept by Grace, from gross Sins of this sort. In the Gratifications of Sense, which are lawful in general, I scrupulously dread Excess, and Undueness of Circumstances. How earnestly do I desire an absolute Purity!

All Envy, Unrighteousness, Uncharitableness, Hardheartedness, Undutifulness, and base Selfishness, which is the Root of all, I have seen, lamented, and abhorred. The Motions and Stirrings of Mind that Way, are suppressed and dislodged: I will never give way thereunto.

Self-applauding, Self-seeking, in Matter of Praise and Honour before Men, I strive against. I desire to be as sincere to another's Reputation, as to my own. I would not value others by their Regard to me, but by their true Worth. I would be contented to be little in the Eyes of Others. This I unfeignedly desire and endeavour, and I hope that I have it in some good Degree.

All my Omissions and Negligencies in the Work of the Ministry, in Preaching, in personal

sonal private Application, I bewail, and heartily resolve upon more Diligence and Faithfulness.

Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, O Lord; but remember me, and spare me according to thy great Mercy in Christ Jesus, the great Propitiation for Sin, in whom I desire to be found, and under the Covert of whose Wing I stand, that I may be saved from thy Wrath, and enjoy thy Peace, and live in thy Presence, where is Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore!

1679.

GOD will never damn, in Hell, any Soul that hath the habitual predominant Love of God, though culpably remiss, and otherwise sinful; yea, Hell and such Love of God, are inconsistent.

I love the holy Will of God with all my Heart, and hate all Disconformity to it. Nothing is more grievous to me, than to displease God; and nothing is more pleasant to me, than to please him.

I strive after christian Perfection.

I labour to be unbottomed of Self, to die to Self-advancement, to Self-glorying, and to all selfish Joys, and to live wholly in, and to God, and to have Self swallowed up in the Love of him.

I labour in the Work of Self-resignation, that my Will may be confined to, and included in the Will of God.

I strive after Patience in its perfect Work, and do find a Willingness to yield to God's Will in my Chastisements. I still justify God, and do not entertain an hard Thought of his Dealing with me; but conclude, that it is altogether holy, just, and good, and for the best.

I feel my Sin a greater Burden to me, than my affliction*. I had rather have Health of Soul in a Body full of Pain, than Health and Ease of Body with a distempered Soul. And the Sense of my great Sinfulness disposeth me

What an indisputable Evidence of Sincerity is this in a Man racked with the Stone!

to Patience, under my afflicting Infirmities of Body.

I narrowly watch my Heart, that it may not lodge or admit a vain Thought. When I am surprized with vanity, I suppress it as soon as I observe it.

I am very fearful of offending in a Word. When on a sudden, and inadvertently, I have spoken a Word, which upon second Thoughts is doubtful to me, though I had not such Doubt in the speaking of it; I have been much perplexed about it, and engaged myself to a greater Watchfulness.

1680.

SURELY, Christ hath my Heart: Whenever I swerve from Christ in a Thought, Word, or Deed, it is by Inadvertency and Surprisal, against my fixed Principle; and I have great Regret at it, and loath myself for it.

If I were out of all Fear of Damnation, I had rather be holy than unholy; and I take Pains, and use God's Means to be holy in
Opposition

Opposition to the Flesh, and I make it my chief Care. And I do this, because I make the Enjoying of God my chief Good; and rather than lose the Hope thereof, I would willingly undergo the Sufferings of this Life, which lead to that blessed Fruition; not excepting the fiery Trial itself.

I hope, when the End cometh, my God will say to me; "*Dear Child, thy Warfare is accomplished, thine Iniquity is pardoned, enter thou into my Rest.*" Therefore, I will both hope, and quietly wait for the Salvation of God. I will hope to the End. Strengthen me, O my God, that I faint not,

1682.

I HAVE no Design, I pursue Nothing contrary to God's Interest: but all my Designs and Pursuits are for God and Holiness. I think I am sure of this, if I be sure of any Thing. My great Aim, and Care, and Labour is to cleanse myself from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God,

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To whom I yield myself a Servant to obey, his Servant I am : But I do not yield myself a Servant to Sin, to obey it ; but I do yield myself a Servant to God, to obey him. The Design and Business of my Life, is to do his Will.

MR. CORBET was for many Years before his Death afflicted with the Stone to so violent a Degree, that at length he determined to submit to an Operation ; for this Purpose he was carried up to London, but God saw fit to call him to a better World before it could be performed, for he survived his Journey but about a Fortnight, departing amidst great Pains, yet in Peace, having an assured Hope of a blessed Immortality.

The Workings of his Heart under his Affliction, make it evident that the Spirit of God was truly in him, and they amount to a satisfactory Proof of the Almighty's special Support of his Children, under the Chastisements he is pleased to lay upon them.

It is a beautiful and instructive View which is given us (*Malachi* iii. 3.) of Christ the Head of the Church, sitting "as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver, to purify the Sons of Levi, and purge them as Gold and Silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an Offering in Righteousness."

Our Author seems to have been a remarkable Instance of the Skill, Power, and Care of the Lord Jesus Christ in the above Character.

May it please God to grant us Patience under our respective Trials; and that "Patience may have her perfect Work," and our Afflictions be made the Means of our Sanctification, let us earnestly pray that the Dissatisfaction and Pain which are wisely scattered up and down in our Passage through Life, may incline us to seek Happiness, in the Enjoyment of him, with whom there is Fulness of Joy, and at whose right Hand are Pleasures for evermore,

W. U.

THE

THE
WORKINGS
OF MY
HEART
IN MY
AFFLICTION.

1689.

THE Will of God in laying this Affliction upon me, I unfeignedly approve as holy, just, and good : And I am unfeignedly willing to bear the Affliction, as it is an Evil laid upon me by his Will, till the Time come, in which he thinks fit to remove it.

I watch, and pray, and strive, that I may not give way to a repining Thought against his holy Hand. In this Point *the Spirit is willing but the Flesh is weak.* My Mind doth really consent to God's Dispensation, and to my Submission, as being most agreeable to his wise and gracious Government, and
C most

most conducing to my Salvation. But my sensitive Part, and my Mind also, as it is in Part unrenewed, weak, and sinful, doth greatly reluctate; so that I am put hard to it, and I must say, *I am willing, Lord, help my Unwillingness.*

I have not observed in the several Days past, that a Thought of direct or positive Discontent, or vexatious Commotion of Mind, hath been admitted by me; nevertheless, I see to my Grief, that I fall exceeding short of that Quietness, Content, and Cheerfulness in my Condition; and of that Freeness of Self-resignation to God's Will, that I desire, and his Goodness calls for.

I wrestle with God by importunate Prayer, that this *Thorn in the Flesh* might depart from me; that this Distemper might be removed, or so mitigated, that I might be in some comfortable Ease, and get a more cheerful Freedom in doing my Duty. Yet I would not wrest this Relief out of his Hands unseasonably, and without his Good-will and his Blessing. I would wait his Time, and desire

to have it with his Love and Favour, and with a saving Benefit.

My earnest Desire of Deliverance is limited with Submission to his holy Will. Yet I find that this Submission is no easy Matter, but that I must take Pains with my own Heart; and that it is God, who must work my Heart to it, and keep under the Flesh, which is always ready to rebel. It is hard to be willing to bear my wearisome Condition: And, O how weak is my Heart, and ready to sink, if it be not upheld by a Strength above my own! *O let his Grace be sufficient for me, and let his Power be made perfect in my Weakness,*

I feel myself better in the inner Man, for this Challenging. It hath furthered Mortification and Self-denial, and done much to the Breaking of the Heart of Pride, and to bring me on towards that more perfect Self-examination, for which I labour.

It hath much deadened the World to me, and my Desire to the World. It makes me know in earnest the Emptiness of all Creatures,

tures, and how great my Concern is in God: It drives me close to him, and makes me to fetch all my Comforts from him.

I see of how little Value all outward Things are towards true Contentment; and not only in my present afflicted State, but if I were at Ease and in full Prosperity. The Sense of this Benefit to my Soul, is the great Means of bringing my Will to that weak Degree of Submission to God's Will, to which I have attained.

O that I could live more by Faith, in this trying Affliction. I endeavour to impress upon my Soul those Arguments which the Scripture affords for Patience and Long-suffering with Joyfulness. But this will not do the Work, unless the Spirit of Faith and Patience be given from him, *from whom comes down every good and perfect Gift.*

I pray, I cry to my Father, that he would give me the holy Spirit, according to his gracious Promise, that I might shew forth the Power of his Grace, and that I might not dishonour him, nor discourage his Children,

nor

nor reproach. Religion by my Weakness. And in my bearing of it well, my Reputation is nothing regarded by me in comparison of the Honour of Christ. Him I desire to glorify both in my Obedience and Patience.

I do not love God the less, because of his correcting Hand upon me. As my Necessities drive me, so his Love draws me, and my Love brings me to him. I look to him as my Father: And shall I not honour my Father, and give him Reverence, when I am chastened of him? The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul: therefore will I hope in him. I will wait for the Lord, who hideth his Face; I will look after him; he retaineth not his Anger for ever, because he delighteth in Mercy. Therefore he will turn again, and have Compassion upon me.

If he kill me, I will put my Trust in him: for he will not cast me off for ever, if I cleave to him. Faith unfeigned; but even thro' Death itself will he save me. He will bring me forth to the Light, and I shall behold his Righteousness.

When I say, *What shall I do, in case of such or such troublesome or dangerous Consequences?* my Heart answers, *Be not careful, God will provide; I will leave it to him.*

Besides a natural Desire of Ease and Rest, the Sense of the Temptation to which I am liable in this Condition, makes me importunate to be delivered from it. I feelingly know the Weakness of my own Heart, and I am not ignorant of the Devil's Malice and Subtilty, and how he will make the fiercest Assaults, where I am weakest. Whereupon I tremble in myself, for fear of being tempted and shaken, and greatly amazed. And upon this Ground, respecting my Soul's Safety, I judge an humble and patient Importunity with God, for the removing and moderating of my Distemper, to be my Duty.

Yet to keep me from being over solicitous and anxious in this Thing, I consider, that "God doth govern and limit our Temptations, and will not "suffer us to be tempted above what we are able; but will, with the Temptation, open a Way for us to escape."

Nevertheless,

Nevertheless, I find, that I do much offend by too great a Vehemence of Desire to be delivered from this grievous Burden, without due Submission; also by too much Disquietness and Dejection, when after some Expectation of a Benefit by that Means, I perceive that my Hope thereof is like to be frustrated. The Lord help me to carry it better, and as I ought to do, and keep my Mind in its right Frame!

My Business under this Affliction is to be careful about my own Part, and to leave God's Part to his Care. My Part is to do my Duty, and to get the Benefit of the Affliction; but to remove it, is God's Part. Let me perform what belongs to me, and what belongs to God he will certainly perform in his own Time and Way.

The Sum of my Duty is humbly to comply with the Dispensation, and to behave myself suitably to it, and to please and honour God under it. Accordingly in this I labour, and in this Way I seek for Comfort. And first I justify God and judge myself. God exercises,

exercises his own Holiness and Justice in this Chastisement.

His Justice and Holiness I approve, and accept the Punishment of mine Iniquity, and exercise an Hatred of the Sin, for which I now smart,

I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, and I repent with a Self-abhorrence; and I lie in the Dust at his Feet, and wait on him, until that he have Mercy upon me, and I am glad to receive Mercy upon his Terms.

I have fled for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope that is set before me. I do most heartily take God for my Portion, and I had rather live the divine Life in conformity to him, and Fellowship with him, here in the First-fruits of the Spirit, and hereafter in the Fulness of Glory, than live in the Fulness of the Delights that belong to the natural Life upon Earth, in a Way of Sin, and Alienation from the Life of God,

I do most heartily take Christ according to the Offer of the Gospel, not only to be justified

justified from my Sins, and delivered from the Wrath to come, by his Merits; but also to be sanctified by his Word and Spirit, and to be governed by his Laws; and to be brought by him unto the aforefaid Fellowship with God: And my Life and Practice, in the main Bent and ordinary Course thereof, is according to this Choice; in a daily Walking, not by Sight and Sense, but by Faith; not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit, in setting my Heart not on earthly, but on heavenly Things.

I cast off vain Desires and Hopes, and my Expectations of Good are from God, according to the Tenor of his Promises. When I walk in Darkness, and see no Light of outward Comfort, human Helps, and visible Means, *I will trust in the Name of the Lord, and flay myself upon my God.*

I strive with my own Spirit, to subdue it to the Will of God: And in whatsoever I am tempted to be most impatient, therein I labour most for Patience. My great Care is, that I may not sin against my God in any kind; and more especially, that I may not
sin

sin by a rebellious Impatience under his correcting Hand.

In this present Distress I look upon myself, as being upon my Trial; and therefore I look more diligently to my Behaviour in it. Now a Price is put into my Hand for the Proof of my Sincerity, and I labour accordingly to make good Proof of it.

I am willing to serve God in Pain and Patience, else I were unworthy of so good a Master. I am willing to be conformable to Christ in suffering, else I were unworthy of him. But here I must say again, *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak; Lord, help my Unwillingness.*

I am called to deny all the Pleasures of Sense, and to mind them no more; and I am heartily willing to do it. I am called to declare to others, by the Exercise of Faith and Patience, the Righteousness of the Lord, and his tender Mercies, and great Faithfulness, and that he alone is all-sufficient. O that the Power of his Grace may be thus magnified in me!

This

This is the Fruit of Affliction; that I look after; and in this I will labour more and more. And thro' the Help of divine Grace, I will not doubt of a good Issue, while I am found in the Way of Duty. *"To them who by patient Continuance in Well-doing seek for Glory and Honour, and Immortality, God who cannot lie, hath promised to give eternal Life."*

I am desirous to be delivered from this Affliction (if it be the Will of the Lord) upon this Account; that I might have a more clear Proof of my freer chusing of God for my Portion, when I am not thus driven to him (as now) because I can go no where else for Comfort; also of my freer Turning from the World, even then when I am capable of enjoying it. To have such a Proof of these Things in myself, I should take for a great Advantage, and be greatly thankful. Nevertheless, for quieting of my Mind, I consider that my present afflicted State doth better secure me from Temptations, which might draw my Heart from God to the Love of the World; in which respect, Prosperity is far more dangerous than Adversity.

Moreover,

M moreover, my present State gives me Advantage for a higher Proof of the Grace that is in me, and of the Power of the divine Aid, upholding me in a Life of Faith and Patience, by which I live upon God alone, when worldly Comfort fails me; and by which I am enabled to overcome Things grievous to Nature; and to get above, not only the Pleasures, but the sharp Pains of Sense; and to live, and endure with little natural or bodily Rest,

Also it gives me the Advantage of exercising a resolved, willing Self-resignation to God in this Dispensation, which is harsh to Flesh and Blood; and a Resting in Hope, when there is no present Appearance of Help; and a Waiting and Looking for the Lord, who hides his Face; and a Cleaving to him by constant Love, tho' he doth fore-bruise me.

If I continue in the Exercise of these Graces, they will give me a good Proof, that the heavenly Nature is in me, and will make way for great Assurance towards God, and full Consolation in Jesus Christ.

And

And yet further ; I trust that I have, long before this Distress chosen God for my Portion, and drawn off my Heart from the flattering Vanities of this World. And I know, that in this Distress, I do not come to him constrainedly, or merely as driven.

I delight to draw nigh to him, to pour out my Heart before him in Prayer and Meditation. My Meditation of him is sweet to my Soul, and I do not love to be diverted from it. And when my Distemper is any whit more easy, it works unto a Rejoicing in him. And it is for an Enlargement of Heart towards him, that I chiefly desire bodily Ease and Rest.

Hear my Cry, O God ; attend unto my Prayer ! I will cry unto thee, when my Heart is overwhelmed : *Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I !*

God, the infinite Goodness and Love, will not cast off a poor Soul that lies at his Foot, and cries for the Help of his Grace, when it is ready to sink under the Burden, and is willing to have Mercy upon his Terms.

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Therefore

Therefore I still will cry to him, and look for him, and lean upon him, and will not depart from him by *an evil Heart of Unbelief*. This I resolve in his Strength. Lord, strengthen me unto the perfect Work of Patience!

Lord, I heartily consent that thou shouldest use me as thou pleasest, so thou use me as one of those that love thy Name! Disposal is an Effect of Propriety, but it is always a regular and a loving Disposal of the Subjects of his Government! O! deal favourably with thy Servant. Thou knowest my Frame; *remember that I am but Dust!*

The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: *Thy Mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever. Forsake not the Works of thine own Hands!* O Lord, without thee I can do Nothing. Therefore I must beg, that thou wilt give Grace sufficient; without which I cannot subsist: For therein is the Life of my Spirit.

For ever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in Heaven!

Pity me, O Lord, as a Father pitieth his Children!

Comfort

Comfort me, O Lord, as one whom his
Mother comforteth!

The Lord will wait, that he may be gra-
cious unto you: *For the Lord is a God of*
Judgment: Blessed are all they that wait
for him.

Can I be in a better Hand? As my pro-
fessed Judgment is concerning God's Proceed-
ing, so let me stand affected towards it:

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FOR

MYSELF.

KEEP thy Heart with all Diligence; for
out of it are the Issues of Life,

Death and Life are in the Power of the
Tongue.

Entertain not a sensual Imagination for a
Moment.

Never expect any Thing from the World;
and when it offers thee any Thing that is good
for thee, receive it; but catch not at it
greedily.

Be always mindful what thou mayest do for
thine own and others Salvation, in every In-
stance, and upon every Occasion.

Die daily.

In arguing with another, watch against every inordinate Heat of Passion, loud Speaking, and every rash Word.

Any Matter of Trial to thee, reckon among thy Gains.

Take no Delight of Sense, but in a manifest and direct Subserviency to spiritual Ends; and use not that Delight to irritate, but to allay Sensuality.

When a sensual Imagination or Passion breaks in, then excite the Taste of the Powers of the World to come; and delay not to recover the divine Frame.

What thou doubtest, do not.

In thy Actions, consider not only what is lawful, but what is best in the present Circumstances; and do that.

When thou art in Company, where the Talk is but vain, watch to put in a Word, that may be to Edification.

Make it a Rule never to speak to the Disadvantage of others, unless it should turn

out so, when Duty calls upon you to speak the whole Truth.

If any despise thee, do not bear a Grudge against him for it. And be not offended with any, merely because they do not honour thee.

When thou art framing Excuses, take heed of speaking an Untruth, or approaching near to it: lest in avoiding the Offence of Man, thou make too bold with God. Take heed of this also, when thou wouldst speak pleasingly, and avoid Offence in Speaking.

Use no Recreation or Delight of Sense, but what thou canst at that very Time desire of God, that it may be sanctified to spiritual Ends.

When thou hearest that another hath spoken any Thing to thy Injury or Disparagement, beware of a Transport of Anger, that thou speak not harshly or unadvisedly against him, or too passionately for Self, or as too much concerned for Self.

Take your Eye off from others; and turn it inward upon yourself; this will render you less

less sensible of their Failings, and more observant of your own, both which Consequences are desirable.

Watch against all secret Pleasure, in the lessening of another for advancing thyself.

It has been said of some religious People, that they are very apt to be censorious, and certainly it is true enough to put us all upon watching that unruly Member the Tongue. Do I find myself forward to think or speak harshly of another? I will endeavour to suppress this evil Temper by the Consideration of these Passages of holy Scripture, "Charity thinketh no Evil;" and "Judge not that ye be not judged."

Pray heartily for the Success of others, who perform the same Service that thou art engaged in. And rejoice in whatsoever Good is done by them, as in what is done by thyself, and own it before Men.

Use not Animosity and Contention in any Matter, that may be brought to a good Issue in the Way of Peace.

Engage

Engage not hastily as a Party in a Difference between others; but reserve thyself impartial and unengaged, that thou mayest moderate between them.

Whilst thou lamentest thy Weakness in some Cases, and seekest more Strength, be sure to use that greater Strength in all other Cases, whereunto thou hast attained; and be not remiss or forgetful in any Duty that is more easy to thee: So shalt thou have Comfort in thy willing Mind, and do much towards the Attainment of that, which thou yet wantest, and reachest after.

In the Time of Prayer, let no Business divert thee from it, that is not of present Necessity.

When thou hast an Opportunity of speaking a Word for the Good of another's Soul, defer not the doing of it till another Time.

Watch against all bitter and passionate Speeches, against malignant Opposers of Truth. For Meekness of Spirit and Behaviour, is more according to Christ, than wrathful Zeal.

In

Notes for Himself.

45

In thy Zeal against the Sins of others, be mindful of thy own exceeding Sinfulness. Call to remembrance thy great Offences, which though they be unfeignedly repented of, give thee to understand what cause thou hast to be meek, and humble, and patient toward all Men.

Watch against the Motions of Pride and Hypocrisy, in the Presence of any Person whose Favour and Opinion thou much esteeme-
est. What is Man that thou shouldest pass to be judged by Man's Judgment, or seek Applause from Man!

Be not discomposed about some petty Absurdities of Behaviour, or little Indecorums, or Overights; for so to be, is Pusillanimity.

When thou hast conceived a Dislike of any Person, his Ways, or Actions, or dost ill resent his Carriage towards thee; take heed thou do not take any secret Pleasure in the Foresight of Evil coming upon him; or in hearing or observing any such Folly of his, as tends to his Reproach or Ruin, or notable Damage.

If

If thou hast sore spoken the Calamity, or any Evil, that in Reason is like to befall one, who doth unadvisedly manage himself, and his Affairs; take heed of wishing or willing, that the Evil should come to pass, lest thy Judgment or Foresight should seem to be disparaged: yea, take heed of any Motion rising towards such a Wish or Will.

My own exceeding Faultiness engages me, in seeing and hearing the Faults and Follies of others, to pity them, rather than to rejoice or glory over them; and to cover or lessen those Faults, rather than to aggravate or display them.

The Mercy and Forgiveness that I have found and hope for at the Lord's Hand, engages and disposes me to forgive Injuries and Abuses done to me. And I should not think it much, that I, who am so sinful, should bear some Abuses from Men.

It is displeasing to me, to hear the Faults of others insisted on, whether they be Matters of Folly and Inconsiderateness, or of Perverseness.

verfenefs and Malice; but efpecially if the Matter be not evident.

There are a thoufand Inflances of Behaviour we meet with in the World, which will admit of two Constructions---I would endeavour always to ufe the moft favourable one.

I find, that petty Damages and Injuries are apt to be vexatious, efpecially in a Matter the whole whereof is but little; as in a little Farm or Living. Wherefore I endeavour that I be not furprised with a troublefome Appearance, and confider the Moment of a Thing how light it is.

Abhor every Thought, Word, and Deed, which is contrary to Love, and tends to the Hurt of others. ✓

The more Men wrong thee, the more watchfully maintain the Love towards them.

After thy public Miniftrations in Prayer and Preaching, be not thoughtful or much concerned how Men like thy Performance; but be concerned for this, how acceptable it

is to God, and how effectual and successful to holy and saving Means.

If God single me out for special great Suffering, I have no Reason to judge amiss of it: For such is the State of the Things in the World, that some Individuals must of Necessity suffer for the Good of the People. And why not I, as well as another? God is my Owner, and he may do with me, as with any other, even as he pleaseth; and he is my Father, and he will use me well, and make me sufficient Amends for all my Suffering; and I shall be no Loser, but an exceeding Gainer thereby in the End.

In this present State of Trial, it is requisite that there be a sufficient Difficulty and Hardship for all those that shall be saved, to grapple with.

For all our Boasts of Freewill; unless there were some heavy Weights of Sufferings cast by Providence into the Balance, to poise against our Propensions to follow Lusts, and Pleasures, and worldly Allurements, we should never seriously set ourselves to the severe and self-

self-denying Duties, which belong to true Godliness.

To avoid Inconveniencies to thyself, expose not any to Danger, whose Safety thou art bound to provide for.

In all Accusations, whether public or private, when thou hast made a sufficient Defence, enter not into needless Matters for Ostentation, or such further Vindication, as is not necessary.

I will never wilfully do amiss, by Commission or Omission, in a greater or lesser Matter, because I shall too often do amiss, at least in smaller Matters, thro' Ignorance, or Inadvertency, or Surprisal of Passion, do what I can.

Remember thou hast Nothing of thine own, but all is the Lord's; and accordingly use all that thou hast to no carnal Interest, but to serve him, as being wholly devoted to him.

Be as serious and hearty, in thy Prayer to God for the Concerns of others, as for thine own.

Watch against Selfishness, lest it work unto great Uncharitableness.

✓ When thou hast Evidences of thy Sincerity, which cannot in Reason be gainsaid, hold to them, and take Comfort in them; yet still endeavour by Reviews, and further Searchings, to clear all more and more.

We keep our Evidences, by keeping our Graces in their lively Exercise.

Fetch thy Comforts from Heaven, and not from Pleasures and Hopes here below.

✓ Do not overvalue any Worth that is in thyself; but think it rather less than it is indeed.

If any slight thee, be neither dejected nor provoked.

Do not value Men according to their Esteem of thee, but according to their true Worth.

✓ Watch against the Expectation of hearing thy own Praise; and when such a Thought arises, instantly suppress it.

When thou art commended, let not thy Thoughts

Thoughts dwell on it with Delight; but let it be to thee as Nothing. ✓

Take heed of too great a Valuation of thine own Work, or Usefulness in thy Place; and lay not too great a Stress thereon,

When Friends out of Love overvalue thee, it concerns thee not to overvalue thyself; nor to take more than thy Due, though they give it.

Have a Habit of Compassion towards the afflicted firmly fixed in thee, that the Motions thereof may be suitably stirred up on every Occasion.

I would strive to make Religion appear as amiable as possible, by a ready Performance of all the Offices of Courtesy and Humanity. ✓

Let an Abhorrence of any Content in another's Sufferings, be deeply imprinted on thee; that every Thought thereof may be prevented, or instantly suppressed: Yes, hate all Disregard to another's Misery. ✓

✓ Watch against all Eagerness, and immoderate Delight in Eating and Drinking; and against minding any Kind of Food, for the Pleasing of the Sense. Come to thy Meals not like a Brute, but as becomes a Saint. Never terminate in the sensitive Pleasure, but make use of it to raise thy Heart to God.

✓ When thou hast eaten so much, so that thou thinkest more is not expedient, or is better forborn than taken, proceed not to a Bit more, lest thou be entangled or disturbed.

✓ Still consider, is this Act I go about, agreeable to one that hath Communion with God? Will this Act promote Communion with God? Do I come to this Act, so as to have Communion with God thereby promoted?

✓ Seek the lawful Contentment of any that are about thee, as thou dost thy own; and be as glad to gratify them as thyself, so far as it is convenient for them. Hate and shun all Motions of unworthy Selfishness: And see, that others be Sharers with thee in thy pleasant Things, and be not content to have them to thyself alone.

I wish to have my Heart possessed of the Love of God first and principally, and as the Source of Love to my Fellow-Creatures; and I would never have it out of my Mind, how frequently a Principle of Benevolence and Philanthropy is infused upon throughout the New Testament. An especial Love is undoubtedly due to those in whom we perceive a Resemblance of the divine Image; yet our Love, I apprehend, is not to be confined to these, but to flow freely like the refreshing Showers of Heaven, upon all who come within its Influence.

Always mind, and do the present Duty. Comply with the present Dispensation, and make the most of it. Thy Business is to please God, and God will provide for thy Comfort.

Lay thy Heart to Rest in the Will of God. For there is no other Rest for the Soul, to be thought on.

I will not be earnest with God for any Good but what is included in the Covenant of Grace. I will expect no Good but accord-

ing to the Tenor of that Covenant, which is all my Salvation, and all my Desire.

I am resolved that Pride shall not set me to study, or preach, or pray, or carry me on in any Service. If Thoughts of Man's Applause, steal in with my honest Intentions, I will instantly cast them out, as soon as they be discovered, and I will watch and pray to prevent them. I will watch, when I go forth in my Service for God, that Pride do not send me forth; that Men's Opinion may be Nothing with me, but that the pleasing God, and doing Good, be my whole Scope.

In performing Prayer, I consider, that a due Regard to Expressions for Men's Sake, that they be affecting and not offensive, is not faulty but necessary; and therefore must be heeded. And I think, that my Thoughts about Men's Judging have this good Effect, that my Expressions be not offensive; yet I am jealous of the Mixture of Corruption and Vanity.

I earnestly endeavour to have my Heart filled with the Apprehension of God's infinite Majesty,

Majesty, and my infinite Concern in him, that all impertinent Thoughts may be quite swallowed up. All designing and endeavouring to please Men for my own Praise, I do at that very Time detest and abandon; yea, at that very Time I am sure, I do very little regard either the Approbation and Praise, or the Disapprobation and Dispraise of those very Persons, about whom my Thoughts are apt to run out, as aforesaid. I do my utmost to prevent, restrain, and suppress all such Thoughts; they are a Burden to me, and I hope that the merciful God will not impute them to me, to the Rejecting of my Prayer, or to any Breach between him and me.

If God approve my Service, and own me in it, I shall be abundantly satisfied; though Men (whatsoever or how many soever they be) should despise and loathe it. On the contrary, if Men should never so highly approve, I can never be satisfied if God do not accept and bless it. This I am sure of, if I be sure of any Thing.

I discern, that by Care I have brought it to that Pass, that my Thoughts of others present

sent with me in Prayer, are not with Regard to their Praise, which I value not; but to what is fit to be done by me in that Service, and to their being affected with it.

I find I am prone to be anxiously scrupulous; yet I should consider that there be inevitable Weaknesses (as impertinent Thoughts), accompanying the best Performances.

The

The following Reflections selected from a large Collection, published by BISHOP HALL, (entitled Meditations and Vows) partake so much of Mr. CORBET's Spirit, that the Editor conceived that they would not be an unsuitable Addition to the Aphorisms of the latter.

IN Meditation, those, which begin heavenly Thoughts, and prosecute them not, are like those which kindle a Fire under green Wood, and leave it, so soon as it begins to flame, losing the Hope of a good Beginning, for want of seconding it: with a suitable Proceeding: when I, for myself, to meditate, I will not give over till I come to an Issue. It hath been said by some that the Beginning is as much as the Middle; yea, more than all: but I say, the Ending is more than the Beginning.

It is the greatest Madness in the World to

be

be an Hypocrite in religious Profession. Men hate thee because thou art a Christian, so much as in Appearance. God hates thee double, because thou art but in Appearance: so, while thou hast the Hatred of both, thou hast no Comfort in thyself. Yet if thou wilt not be good as thou seemest; I hold it better to seem ill as thou art. An open wicked Man doth much Hurt with notorious Sins; but an Hypocrite doth at last more shame Goodness by seeming good. I had rather be an open wicked Man, than an Hypocrite: but I had rather be no Man, than either of them.

When I cast down mine Eyes upon my Wants, upon my Sins, upon my Miseries; methinks no Man should be worse, no Man so ill as I; my Means so many, so forcible, and almost violent; my Progress so small, and insensible; my Corruptions so strong, my Infirmities so frequent and remediless; my Body so unanswerable to my Mind. But when I look up to the Blessings that God hath enriched me withal, methinks I should soon be induced to think none more happy than myself. God is my Friend and my Father: the World

World not my Master, but my Slave: I have Friends, not many, but so tried that I dare trust them: An Estate not superfluous, not needy; yet nearer to Defect, than Abundance: A Calling, if despised of Men, yet honourable with God: A Body not so strong as to admit Security, (but often checking me in Occasion of Pleasure) nor yet so weak, as to afflict me continually: A Mind not so furnished with Knowledge, that I may boast of it; not yet so naked, that I should despair of obtaining it. My Miseries afford me Joy; mine Enemies Advantage; my Account is cast up for another World; and if thou think I have said too much Good of myself, either I am thus, or I would be.

I have seldom seen much Ostentation and much Learning met together. The Sun, rising and declining, makes long Shadows; at Mid-day when he is at highest, none at all. Besides that, Skill when it is too much shewn, loseth the Grace: as fresh-coloured Wares; if they be often opened, lose their Brightness; and are soiled with much Handling. I had rather applaud myself for having much, than I
shew

shew not, than that others should applaud me
for shewing more than I have.

Prejudice is so great an Enemy to Truth,
that it makes the Mind incapable of it. In
Matters of Faith, I will first lay a sure Ground,
and then believe, though I cannot argue;
holding the Conclusion in spite of the Pre-
misses: but in other less Matters, I will not so
forestall my Mind with Resolution, as that I
will not be willing to be better informed.
Neither will I say in myself, I will hold it,
therefore it shall be Truth: but this is Truth,
therefore I will hold it. I will not strive
for Victory, but for Truth.

He that lives well, cannot chuse but die
well. For, if he die suddenly, yet he dies
not unpreparedly: if by Leisure, the Consci-
ence of his well-lead Life makes his Death
more comfortable. But it is seldom seen, that
he which liveth ill, dieth well. For the
Conscience of his former Evils, his present
Pain, and the Expectation and Fear of greater,
so take up his Heart, that he cannot seek
God. And now it is just with God, not to

be fought, or to be found, because he fought to him in his Life Time, and was repulsed. Whereas therefore there are usually two main Cares of good Men, to live well, and die well: I will have but this one; to live well.

With God there is no free Man, but his Servant, though in the Gallies: no Slave, but the Sinner, though in a Palace: none noble, but the virtuous, if never so basely descended: none rich, but he that possesseth God, even in Rags: none wise, but he that is a Fool to himself and the World: none happy, but he whom the World pities: Let me be free, noble, rich, wise, happy to God; I pass not what I am to the World.

I see that as black and white colours to the Eyes, so is the Vice and Virtue of others to the Judgment of Men. Vice gathers the Beams of the Sight in one; that the Eye may see it, and be intent upon it: Virtue scatters them abroad, and therefore hardly admits of a perfect Apprehension. Whence it comes to pass, that (as Judgment is according to Sense) we do so soon espy, and so earnestly censure a

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Man

Man for one Vice; letting pass many laudable Qualities undiscerned, or at least unacknowledged. Yea, whereas every Man is once a Fool, and doth that (perhaps) in one Fit of his Folly, which he shall at leisure repent of; the World is hereupon ready to call in Question all his former Integrity, and to exclude him from the Hope of any future Amendment. Since God has given me two Eyes; the one shall be busied about the present Fault that I see, with a detesting Commiseration; the other about the commendable Qualities of the Offender; not without an impartial Approbation of them. So shall I do God no Wrong, in robbing him of the Glory of his Gifts, mixed with Infirmities: nor yet, in the mean Time, encourage Vice; while I do distinctly reserve for it a due Proportion of Hatred.

I will hate Popularity and Ostentation (as ever dangerous; but most of all, in God's Business) which who so affect, do as ill Spokesmen; who when they are sent to woo for God, speak for themselves. I know how dangerous it is to have God my Rival.

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There is no Man so happy as the Christian. When he looks up into Heaven, he thinks, that is my Home: the God that made it, and owns it, is my Father: the Angels, more glorious in Nature than myself, are my Attendants: mine Enemies are my Vassals. Yea, those Things, which are the terriblest of all to the wicked, are most pleasant to him. When he hears God thunder above his Head, he thinks, this is the Voice of my Father. When he remembereth the Tribunal of the last Judgment, he thinks, it is my Saviour that sits in it: when Death, he esteems it but as the Angel set before Paradise; which with one Blow admits him to eternal Joy. And (which is most of all) nothing in Earth or Hell can make him miserable. There is nothing in the World, worth envying, but a Christian.

It is an hard Thing for a Man to find Weariness in Pleasure, while it lasteth; or Contentment in Pain, while he is under it. After both (indeed) it is easy: yet both of these must be found in both; or else we shall be drunken with Pleasures, and overwhelmed with Sorrow. As those, therefore, which

should eat some Dish over-deliciously sweet, do allay it with Tart Sauce, that they may not be cloyed: and those that are to receive bitter Pills (that they may not be annoyed with their unpleasing Taste) roll them in Sugar: So in all Pleasures it is best to labour, not how to make them most delightful, but how to moderate them from Excess: and in all Sorrows, so to settle our Hearts in true Grounds of Comfort, that we may not care so much for being bemoaned of others, as how to be most contented in ourselves.

Sudden Extremity is a notable Trial of Faith, or any other Disposition of the Soul. For as in a sudden Fear, the Blood gathers to the Heart, for guarding of that Part which is principal: so the Powers of the Soul combine themselves in an hard Exigent, that they may be easily judged of. The faithful (more suddenly than any casualty) can lift up his Heart to his Stay in Heaven: Whereas the worldling stands amazed, and distraught with the Evil; because he hath no Refuge to fly unto. For, not being acquainted with God in his Peace, how should he but have him to seek in his Extremity? When therefore some
sudden

sudden Stitch girds me in the Side, like to be the Messenger of Death; or when the Sword of mine Enemy, in an unexpected Assault, threatens my Body; I will seriously note how I am affected: so the suddenest Evil, as it shall not come unlooked for, shall not go away unthought of. If I find myself courageous and heavenly-minded, I will rejoice in the Truth of God's Grace in me; knowing that one Dram of tried Faith, is worth a whole Pound of speculative; and that, which once stood by me, will never fail me. If dejected and heartless, herein I will acknowledge Cause of Humiliation; and, with all Care and Earnestness, seek to store myself against the Dangers following.

Every Man hath his Turn of Sorrow: whereby (some more, some less) all Men are in their Times miserable. I never yet could meet with the Man that complained not of somewhat. Before Sorrow come, I will prepare for it: when it is come, I will welcome it: when it goes, I will take but half a Farewel of it, as still expecting its Return.

There be three Things that follow an Injury so far as it concerneth ourselves; (for, as the Offence toucheth God, it is above our Reach) Revenge, Censure, Satisfaction; which must be remitted of the merciful Man. Yet not at all Times: but Revenge always, leaving it to him that can, and will do it: Censure oft-times; Satisfaction sometimes. He that deceives me oft, though I must forgive him, yet Charity binds me not, not to censure him for untrusty: and he, that hath endamaged me much, cannot plead Breach of Charity, in my seeking his Restitution. I will so remit Wrongs, as I may not encourage others to offer them; and so retain them, as I may not induce God to retain mine to him.

Garments that have once one Rent in them, are subject to be torn on every Nail and every Briar; and Glasses, that are once crackt, are soon broken: Such is Man's good name once tainted with just Reproach. Next to the Approbation of God, and the Testimony of mine own Conscience, I will seek for a good Reputation amongst Men: not by close Carriage concealing Faults, that they may not
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be known to my Shame: but avoiding all Vices, that I may not deserve it. It is hard for me ever to do Good, unless I be reputed good.

Many végetable and many brute Creatures exceed Man in Length of Age, which hath opened the Mouths of Heathen Philosophers to accuse Nature, as a Step-Mother to Man; who hath given him the least Time to live, that only could make Use of his Time in getting Knowledge. But herein Religion doth most magnify God, in his Wisdom and Justice; teaching us, that other Creatures live long, and perish to nothing, only Man recompenses the Shortness of his Life, with Eternity after it; that the sooner he dies well, the sooner he comes to Perfection of Knowledge, which he might in vain seek below: the sooner he dies ill, the less Hurt he doth with his Knowledge. There is great Reason then, why Man should live long, greater why he should die early. I will never blame God for making me too soon happy; for changing my Ignorance for Knowledge; my Corruption for Immortality; my

my Infirmities for Perfection. *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

A Man under God's Affliction, is like a Bird in a Net, the more he striveth, the more he is entangled. God's Decree cannot be eluded with Impatience. What I cannot avoid, I will learn to bear.

The common Fears of the World are causeless and ill-placed. No Man fears to do ill; every Man to suffer ill: wherein, if we consider it well, we shall find that we fear our best Friends. For my Part, I have learned more of God and of myself in one Week's Extremity, than all my whole Life's Prosperity had taught me before. And, in Reason and common Experience, Prosperity usually makes us forget our Death: Adversity, on the other Side, makes us neglect our Life. Now (if we measure both of these, by their Effects) Forgetfulness of Death makes us secure: Neglect of this Life makes us careful of a better. So much therefore as Neglect of Life is better than Forgetfulness of Death; and Watchfulness better than Security: so much more beneficial will I esteem Adversity than Prosperity.

I have wondered oft and blushed for Shame, to read in mere Philosophers (which had no other Mistress but Nature) such strange Resolution in the Contempt of both Fortunes (as they call them :) such notable Precepts for a constant Settledness and Tranquillity of Mind ; and to compare it with my own Disposition, and Practice : whom I have found too much drooping and dejected under small Crosses ; and easily again carried away with little Prosperity :---To see such Courage and Strength to condemn Death, in those which thought they wholly perished in Death ; and to find such Faintheartedness in myself at the first Conceit of Death, who yet am thoroughly persuaded of the future Happiness of my Soul. I have the Benefit of Nature as well as they ; besides infinite other Helps that they wanted. Oh, the Dulness and Blindness of us unworthy Christians ! that suffer Heathens, by the dim Candle-light of Nature, to go further than we by the clear Sun of the Gospel : so that an indifferent Person could not tell by our Practice, whether were the Pagan. Let me never for shame account myself a Christian, unless my Art of Christianity has imitated and gone beyond Nature, so far, that I can find the best
Heathen

Heaven as far below me in true Resolution, as the vulgar sort were below them. Else, I may shame Religion; it can neither honour nor help me.

God is the God of Order, not of Confusion. As therefore, in natural Things, he useth to proceed from one Extreme to another by Degrees, through the Mean: so doth he in spiritual. The Sun riseth not at once to his highest, from the Darknes of Midnight; but first sends forth some feeble Glimmering of Light in the Dawning; then looks out with weak and waterish Beams; and so by degrees ascends to the Midst of Heaven. So in the Seasons of the Year, we are not one Day scorched with a Summer Heat, and on the next, frozen with a sudden Extremity of Cold. But Winter comes on softly; first, by cold Dews, then hoary Frosts; until at last it descend to the hardest Weather of all. Such are God's spiritual Proceedings; He never brings any Man from the Estate of Sin, to the Estate of Glory, but through the Estate of Grace. And as for Grace, he seldom brings a Man from gross Wickedness to any Eminence of Perfection. I will be charitably jealous of those
Men

Men, which from notorious Lewdness leap at once into a sudden Forwardness of Profession. Holiness doth not, like *Jonas's* Gourd, grow up in a Night. I like it better to go on soft and sure, than for an hasty Fit to run myself out of Wind; and after stand still and breathe me.

For a Man to be weary of the World through Miseries that he meets with (and for that cause to covet Death) is neither difficult nor commendable; but rather argues a base Weakness of Mind. So it may be a cowardly Part, to contemn the utmost of all terrible Things, in a Fear of lingering Misery. But for a Man either living happily here on Earth, or resolving to live miserably, yet to desire his Removal to Heaven, doth well become a true christian Courage; and argues a noble Mixture of Patience and Faith. Of Patience, for that he can and dare abide to live sorrowfully: Of Faith, for that he is assured of his better being other-where; and therefore prefers the absent Joys he looks for, to those he feels in present. No Sorrow shall make me wish myself dead, that I may not be at all.

No

Meditations.

No Contentment shall hinder me from wishing myself with Christ, that I may be happier.

There is nothing more easy than to say Divinity by Rote ; and to discourse of spiritual Matters from the Tongue or Pen of others : but to hear God speak it to the Soul, and to feel the Power of Religion in ourselves, and to express it out of the Truth of Experience within, is both rare and hard. All that we feel not in the Matters of God, is but Hypocrisy : and therefore the more we profess, the more we sin. It will never be well with me till in these greatest Things I be careless of others Censures, fearful only of God's, and my own : till sound Experience has really catechised my Heart, and made me know God and my Saviour, otherwise than by Words ; I will never be quiet till I can see, and feel, and taste God : my Hearing I will account as only serving to effect this, and my Speech only to express it.

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